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ABSTRACT

This study (1) describes student selection and retention procedures currently used by North Central Association colleges and universities which are accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and (2) determines student selection and retention procedures which administrators of teacher education programs at the same institutions suggested should be employed. A questionnaire designed to gather information concerning the criteria used for student selection and retention was developed. A random sample of 100 institutions, 98 of which responded, was selected from the above mentioned population. Analysis of the findings reveal that multiple selection and retention criteria are preferable to any single criterion; periodic checkpoints for review of student progress should exist; scholastic aptitude is the most widely applied criterion; few applicants are denied entry into teacher education programs; early identification of unsuitable teacher candidates is necessary; and a need exists for an introductory course in education to properly orient prospective teachers to the profession. (Author/DDO)

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WHO SHOULD BECOME A TEACHER? CURRENT STUDENT SELECTION-RETENTION POLICIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

by Harold A. Brubaker

The importance of teaching, specifically the quality of teaching, to the educational process is widely accepted by educators. Accordingly, no school is stronger than the combined strength of the teaching faculty. At the same time that persons are occupying teaching positions, still others are in training who are not fitted for the profession.[1]

Participants in the 1970 North Central Association Teacher Education Workshop at Ball State University asserted that the right of teacher education institutions to select persons for admittance to teacher preparation programs has seldom been questioned. However, assumptions regarding the ability to select with reasonable assurance of success, persons who will effectively discharge teaching responsibilities in an increasingly complex world has been questioned. The teacher is an essential servant of society and selection of persons best suited for professional service is a right and a responsibility of teacher preparation institutions.[2]

The problem has not been one of whether or not teacher education institutions should utilize selection-retention standards, but what such standards should entail. Koerner stated that much negative concern has been expressed by teacher-educators regarding selection and retention of students in teacher preparation programs. The concerns relate to whether students will be unhappy if excluded from the program and the inaccuracy of unsupported judgments of capability and competence.[3] For these reasons, until recently, nearly all programs of selection and retention have focused on student

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academic aptitude and achievement. Recent attempts to make the selection-retention process relate more directly to teaching potential have been reflected by competency or performance-based programs of teacher education.

In an attempt to isolate and identify selection-retention criteria being utilized presently in teacher education institutions, a study was undertaken.[4]

Purpose and Structure of the Study

The purposes of the study were (1) to describe student selection-retention procedures currently used by North Central Association colleges and universities which are accreditated by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, (2) to determine student selection-retention procedures which administrators of teacher education programs at the same institutions suggested should be employed.[5]

A questionnaire designed to gather information concerning the criteria used for student selection and retention was developed. The population included all North Central Association colleges and universities accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. From the population, a random sample of 100 institutions was selected. Completed questionnaires were returned by 98 of the 100 sampled institutions.[6]

The data derived from the questionnaire were classified according to (1) the size of the teacher education department in each institution as determined by the approximate number of graduating seniors on the teacher education curriculum, and (2) the type of institution, that is, public or private in nature.[7]

Findings

The following findings concerning the selection-retention program were supported by questionnaire responses and the review of selected literature.

1. Multiple criteria are more satisfactory than any single criterion for both selection and retention in teacher education.

2. Student progress should be reviewed at periodic points throughout preparation.

3. Presently, nearly all institutions practive selective retention in addition to selective admission.

4. Scholastic aptitude, whether represented by high school graduating class standing or by college grade point average, is the most commonly utilized selection-retention standard.

5. The personal interview and other forms of faculty-student interaction should be employed as a selection-retention technique.

6. Improved selection-retention criteria should be developed.

7. Most institutions require students to apply for admission to the teacher education program at a specific time.

8. Few applicants are denied entry to teacher education programs regardless of the size of nature of the institution.

9. A need exists for better record keeping and more comprehensive testing of prospective teacher education candidates.

10. Evaluations of the personality and character of prospective candidates are necessary.

11. A joint administrative and faculty committee to evaluate student progress in the teacher education program is preferable to evaluation by one person.

12. A need exists to identify, early in the program, persons not suitable to become teachers. Early identification will aid not only the prefession, but will allow rejected applicants the opportunity to pursue an alternative career choice before investing considerable energy and resources.

13. Performance in the laboratory phase of teacher education was viewed as closely related to ultimate teaching success.

14. More interviewing and counseling were suggested as means of aiding students in the self-selection process.

15. Earlier and expanded laboratory esperiences facilitate retention decisions, both from the standpoint of self-selection and institutional screening.

16. An introductory course in education, including the use of supply-demand data for various teaching fields, provides an effective orientation to the program and serves as a screening device.

17. Performance-based programs, whether adopted wholly or incrementally, will receive increased utilization.[8]

The following findings concerning the selection-retention program were supported by the review of selected literature but evidence was not found in present practice as reported in questionnaire responses.

1. Provisions should be made in the program to keep potentially good prospects from dropping out.

2. Any assessment of the capabilities of a potential teacher should include feedback from the students with whom the teacher has worked.

3. Any selection-retention program should undergo continuous evaluation and follow-up to determine the success of the graduates and what percentage remain in teaching.

4. Good teaching prospects should be aided to remove any deficiencies that become apparent.

5. An essential to the success of any selection-retention program is adequate communication of the standards being employed.

6. Student health, voice, speech and ability to communicate are of prime concern when making decisions on retention.[9]

The following findings concerning the selection-retention program were supported by questionnaire responses but not by the review of literature.

1. Grade point average was the most effective means of screening prospective entrants into the teacher education program.

2. Most institutions were satisfied by the manner in which the selective admissions program functioned.[10]

Conclusions

Several conclusions, based upon the previously mentioned findings, may be drawn.

1. Selection-retention standards need to be more refined in order to upgrade the overall profession. The upgrading of standards has, in the past, been nearly impossible because of pressures to produce more teachers to meet rising enrollments in public schools. With a leveling of public school enrollments, the feasibility of improving selection-retention standards in teacher education is more distinct.

2. Success in laboratory experiences, personality, interest in and attitude toward teaching, and interviewing and counseling to aid self-selection, are factors that should supplement academic ability in selection-retention programs.

3. The complexity of establishing defensible standards is still recognized and appears to stem from the difficulty of identifying specifically the elements necessary for successful teaching.

4. Prospective teachers should receive an increased exposure to laboratory experiences. Earlier classroom experience is a promising consideration to aid screening and to facilitate self-selction. An internship program which would intensify the traditional student teaching experience is another possible alternative.

5. More interviewing and counseling, better and more detailed record keeping and more comprehensive testing of prospective teacher education candidates should be incorporated into teacher education programs. To do so will require increased commitment for student personnel services.

6. The whole program of selection-retention needs to be more systematic, involve more people, and be more definitive at the various checkpoints.

The use of a joint administrative and faculty committee is advocated instead of decisions being made by one person.

7. Proper orientation to teacher education is essential and by no means automatice. An introductory education course should have, as a major purpose, the proper orientation of prospective teachers.

8. The practive of selective admission and retention is not a new concept. Most institutions are now, and have been, praticing both in addition to the institutional requirements for admission.

9. Almost any selectivity in teacher education would represent an increase of the past practice. Most institutions reject fewer than ten percent of the teacher education applicants. Such a contention appears to be in conflict with the conclusion that the prective of selective admission and retention is nearly universal. Although the practice is nearly universal, few students are actually screened from the programs.

10. In the past, the emphasis has more directly dealt with selection rather than retention. A likely shift in emphasis will take place. While initial selection will continue, exit capabilities will become the real test of whether a candidate is allowed to enter teaching.

11. With the emphasis on exit capabilities, competency-based teacher education will receive considerable scrutiny. While many institutions may not totally adopt a performance or competency-based program, many will begin to incrementally link components of such a program to present standards.[11]

A study of previous practive indicates that, for most institutions, the process of selection and retention of prospective teachers has largely been a myth. Only a small percentage of prospective teachers are screened from programs of preparation, either initially at entrance or during preparation. Most prevalent among suggestions for change are increased emphasis

on self-selection through earlier laboratory experiences, expanded criteria for judging the potential and capabilities of prospective teachers, and the involvement of more people in making such determinations.

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